

117 East Center St.
Rochester, Minnesota 55904
P 507/288-4840
F 507/288-4908
www.restovichlaw.com

Restovich·Braun & ASSOCIATES

Attorneys and Counselors at Law

Anna M. Restovich
Thomas R. Braun
Bruce K. Piotrowski
Christopher W. Coon
Michael J. Restovich
Tammy L. Shefelbine
Aurora M. DeCook
Daniel A. McIntosh

George F. Restovich
1946-2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On April 30, 2024, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety launched an initiative through the Minnesota State Patrol designed to provide “extra speed enforcement” on Minnesota roads. The Department of Public Safety wrote, when unveiling this enforcement plan, “A driver speeding past you on the interstate is scary enough, but many speeding-related fatalities occur on other roads that are designed for lower speeds and have intersections, oncoming traffic and pedestrians.”¹

While the State of Minnesota intensified its efforts to aggressively enforce the traffic laws against the traveling public, it knowingly employed a State Trooper, Shane Roper, with a documented history of shocking, dangerous, and unlawful driving conduct while on duty. Trooper Roper had been previously disciplined for four crashes while driving a squad car on duty, each of which were due to excessive speed, inattentive driving, or both.

On May 18, 2024, less than three weeks after the State Patrol began its speed enforcement crackdown, Oliva Flores and two of her friends were driving to the Apache Mall. At the same time, Trooper Roper was also driving near the Apache Mall. Trooper Roper was speeding at over twice the posted speed limit (83 miles per hour in a 40 miles per hour zone) and without emergency lights or sirens activated, immediately before he struck the vehicle in which Olivia Flores was a passenger. The crash occurred just outside of the entrance to the Apache Mall, a location well-known to have high levels of vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Olivia Flores died as a result of the injuries she sustained.

According to the Criminal Complaint, during Trooper Roper’s shift that day, and prior to the fatal car crash causing the death of Olivia Flores, Trooper Roper drove over 99 miles per hour on numerous occasions without his lights and sirens activated. In one instance, Trooper Roper drove 135 miles per hour in a 55 miles per hour zone, again without his lights and sirens activated. This driving conduct by Trooper Roper establishes a consistent pattern of egregious driving conduct, which was known and effectively condoned by Minnesota State Patrol.

¹ <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ooc/news-releases/Pages/look-forward-to-safe-summer-by-watching-your-speed.aspx>

Trooper Roper should not have been on the road in a Minnesota State Patrol squad car on May 18, 2024. During the years leading up to the day he hit and killed Olivia Flores, institutional failures by the Minnesota State Patrol and Department of Public Safety repeatedly put Trooper Roper back on the road after he had endangered others while on duty. As Minnesota State Patrol Col. Christina Bogojevic stated just two days before Trooper Roper hit and killed Olivia Flores, "Losing a loved one because of a crash that was likely preventable is heartbreaking and unacceptable."²

It is heartbreaking and unacceptable to the Flores family that the State of Minnesota allowed Trooper Roper to be on the road in a Minnesota State Patrol squad car after knowing that he posed a clear danger to others.

The Flores family calls on the Commissioner of Public Safety, Bob Jacobson, Minnesota State Patrol Col. Christina Bogojevic, and Governor Tim Walz to commence an open and independent investigation of the organizational failures that led to Trooper Roper taking Olivia Flores' life, and seriously injuring the other victims in this crash, to avoid such a senseless and preventable tragedy in the future.

The Flores family appreciates the continued outpourings of community support. They continue to request that their privacy be respected during this difficult time and that all further inquiries from media outlets or otherwise be directed to Daniel A. McIntosh, Esq., Restovich Braun & Associates, 117 E. Center St., Rochester, MN 55904, (507) 288-4840.

² <https://dps.mn.gov/blog/Pages/20240516-state-patrol-rural-speed-reduction-project.aspx>